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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to explore the concurrent validity of the Spiritual Well-being Scale (SWB). Ninety first-year student volunteers at an evangelical seminary served as subjects. As part of a larger study, the students completed the SWB and the Interpersonal Behavior Survey (IBS). The SWB Scale is a 20-item self-report scale. Ten items measure the vertical dimension of relationship to God, and comprise Religious Well-being (RWB). The IBS measures several dimensions of interpersonal behavior. It contains MMPI-type validity scales, seven aggressiveness scales, eight scales measuring assertiveness behaviors, and three relationship scales. Results showed that SWB--and its subscales RWB and Existential Well-being (EWB)--were positively correlated with the Denial and Impression Management validity scales of the IBS and negatively correlated with the Infrequency Scale; they were negatively correlated with all of the aggressiveness scales; they correlated positively with five of the assertiveness scales and were not significantly related to the remaining three assertiveness scales; they correlated negatively with the Shyness and Dependency relationship scales, but were unrelated to the Conflict Avoidance Scale. The results suggest that Spiritual Well-being is negatively related to self-reported aggressiveness, dependency, and shyness in this seminary population. (LMO)

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Religion and Wellbeing:

Concurrent Validation of the Spiritual Well-being Scale

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Abstract

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A group of 90 first year students at an evangelical seminary participated in a correlational study designed to explore the validity of the Spiritual Well-being Scale (SWB). Results showed that the SWB scale and its two subscales, Religious Well-being (RWB) and Existential Well-being (EWB) were negatively correlated with all seven aggressiveness scales, Dependency and Shyness on the Interpersonal Behavior Survey (IBS), and positively correlated with five of the eight assertiveness scales on the IBS. These results are in the predicted direction, suggesting that SWB is associated with low aggressiveness and high assertiveness in this sample.

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Religion and Wellbeing:

Concurrent Validation of the Spiritual Well-being Scale

The issue of the relationship of religion to health and wellbeing is one which has a long history in psychology. Freud and Jung are among the earlier psychologists who showed interest in this area. More recently, authors such as Skinner and Ellis have expressed their views. However, only a limited amount of research has been done to examine the empirical relationships between religion and wellbeing.

Recently, Ellison and Paloutzian have developed the Spiritual Well-Being Scale (SWB) in an effort to more adequately measure several aspects of the religious dimension of personality (Campise, Ellison and Kinsman, 1979; Ellison, 1983; Ellison and Paloutzian, 1978, 1979; Paloutzian, 1982; Paloutzian and Ellison, 1979a, b). The present study seeks to extend the concurrent validation of this measure and to provide a better understanding of the relationships between religiousity and psychological health.

Method

A group of 90 student volunteers from the 1982-83 and 1983-84 entering classes at an evangelical seminary served as subjects. As part of a larger study (Parker, 1984), the students completed the Spiritual Well-being Scale and the Interpersonal Behavior Survey in a group setting at the Student Counseling Service on campus.

Instruments

Spiritual Well-being Scale (SWB). The SWB scale is a 20-item self-report scale. Ten items measure the vertical dimension of relationship to God, and comprise Religious Well-being (RWB). The remaining ten items measure the horizontal demension of meaning, purpose and satisfaction in life, and form the Existential Well-being subscale (EWB).

According to Ellison, reliability of the SWB scale is good; test-retest reliabilities were .93, .96, and .86 while split-half reliabilities were .89, .87, and .78 for SWB, RWB and EWB respectively. Preliminary validation studies show that SWB and its subscales are positively related to self-esteem, Purpose-in-Life, Intrinsic Religious Orientation on the Religious Orientation Survey, and to self-reports of experiencing positive peer relationships, positive parent-child relationships, and family togetherness as a child. SWB was found to be negatively correlated with scores on the UCLA Loneliness Scale and to the endorsement of success and personal freedom orientations as personal values.

Interpersonal Behavior Survey (IBS). The IBS was developed to measure several dimensions of interpersonal behavior. It contains MMPI-type validity scales, seven aggressiveness scales, eight scales measuring assertive behaviors, and three relationship scales. Test-retest reliability is above .80 on all IBS scales. Validation studies show that IBS assertive and aggressive scales are uncorrelated, and confirmed predicted

relationships with other scales. One study showed a significant increase in IBS assertiveness scores following a brief assertiveness training experience (Mauger & Adkinson, 1980).

Results and Discussion

Results showed that SWB, RWB and EWB were positively correlated with the Denial and Impression Management validity scales of the IBS and negatively correlated with the Infrequency scale; they were negatively correlated with all of the aggressiveness scales; they correlated positively with five of the assertiveness scales and were not significantly related to the remaining three assertiveness scales; they correlated negatively with the Shyness and Dependency relationship scales, but were unrelated to the Conflict Avoidance scale. (See Tables 1 and 2).

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

The positive relationship between SWB and the Denial and Impression Management scales raise some interpretive problems. However, it is evident from other data that seminarians score higher than a general population on these scales (eg, Parker, 1984), and scores were within normal limits. Thus a tentative interpretation of the data seems warranted.

In general, the results suggest that Spiritual Well-being is negatively related to self-reported aggressiveness, dependency, and shyness in this seminary population. Spiritual Well-being

is positively related to several dimensions of assertive behavior, but was not related to Frankness, Defending Assertiveness and Refusing the requests of others.

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Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the SWB Scales

Scale	Mean	SD
RWB	56.19	5.15
EWB	53.78	5.31
SWB	109.99	9.44

Table 2: Intercorrelation of SWB and IBS Scales

	SWB	RWB	EWB
IBS Scales			
Validity			
Denial	.343*	.269*	.352*
Infrequency	-.325*	-.322*	-.268*
Impression Management	.468*	.362*	.486*
Aggressiveness			
General Aggressiveness	-.564*	-.528*	-.499*
Hostile Stance	-.510*	-.463*	-.465*
Expression of Anger	-.339*	-.229*	-.389*
Disregard for Rights	-.257*	-.209*	-.257*
Verbal Expression	-.394*	-.367*	-.354*
Physical Aggressiveness	-.262*	-.231*	-.247*
Passive Aggressiveness	-.456*	-.359*	-.465*
Assertiveness			
General Assertiveness	.260*	.319*	.269*
Self Confidence	.350*	.357*	.343*
Initiating Assertiveness	.338*	.350*	.260*
Defending Assertiveness	.046	.065	.017
Frankness	.054	.042	.054
Praise	.298*	.291*	.252*
Requesting Help	.363*	.370*	.290*
Refusing Demands	.065	-.004	.123
Conflict Avoidance	-.022	-.010	-.025
Dependency	-.251*	-.235*	-.219*
Shyness	-.340*	-.320*	-.294*